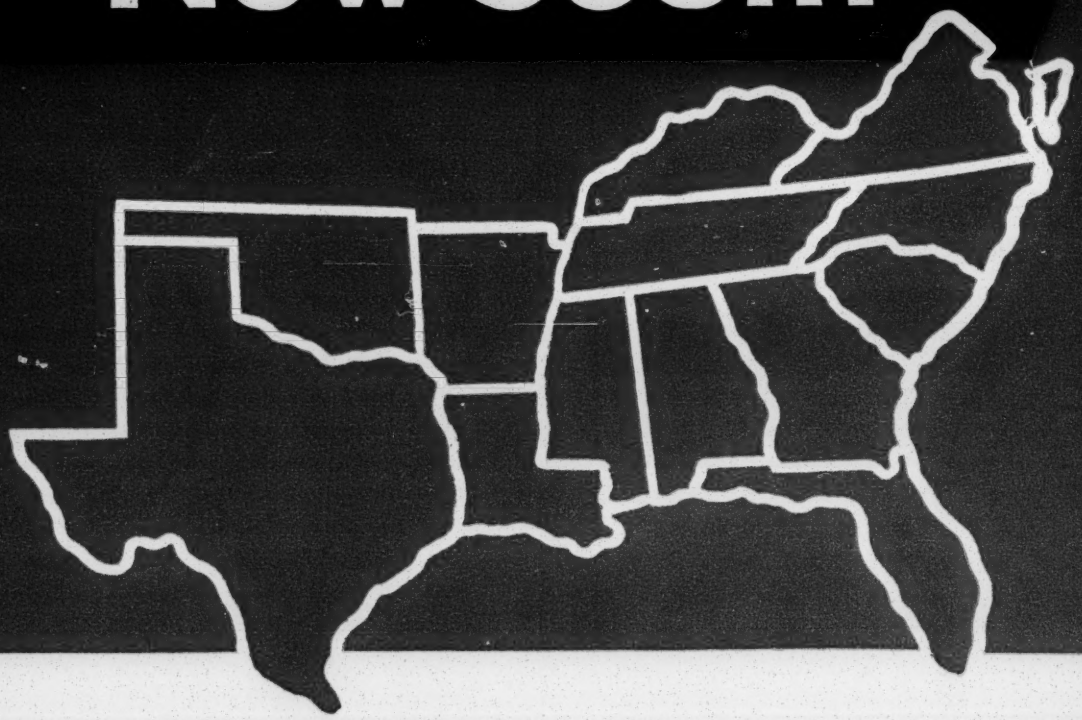
New South



MARTIN LUTHER KING
on
Love, Law and Civil Disobedience

BENJAMIN MUSE
on
Putnam's Anthropology

DECEMBER / 1961

Strictly Subjective

By MARGARET LONG

New South

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WE ALL SHARED in the surge of pride which coursed from Albany, Ga., to the Justice Department in Washington when that rich and pleasant little city weathered demonstrations and arrests of more than 700 Negroes with impeccable policing and no blood in the streets.

Here was the first Negro uprising, an unique one of resolute Negroes of all ages and classes welcoming jail by the hundreds, in the dread deeps of South Georgia. The week-long demonstrations were appeased and halted without mob violence, police brutality or the long-predicted flow of blood in the streets. Indeed, the spacious and sunny streets of Albany, festooned with silver for Christmas business, remained quite unspattered by gore and unlittered with dead bodies. The proud relief of one and all over this happy circumstance moved Robert Kennedy to congratulate the Mayor of Albany and inspired the able young Police Chief Laurie Pritchett to observe that while his roots are deep in the South, he knows that times are changing and he proposes to meet them with law and order.

Only one white drunk raised a hostile fist over kneeling Negroes around the city hall, sang Dixie and was promptly popped into the pokey for exercising this ancient right of a Dixie drunk. One city jail guard hit a Negro prisoner and was immediately fired.

Still, as happy as we all are that Albany refrained from drawing blood, I think perhaps our pride may be excessive. I suggest that the Attorney-General nearly insults South Georgia with his congratulations to the city and disregard of appeals from jailed Negroes of the Albany movement.

I think we can expect better of

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Love, Law and Civil Disobedience

By Martin Luther King, Jr.

(A transcript of Dr. King's address to the annual meeting of the Fellowship of the Concerned, November 16 in Atlanta.)

MEMBERS of the Fellowship of the Concerned, of the Southern Regional Council, I need not pause to say how very delighted I am to be here today, and to have the opportunity of being a little part of this very significant gathering. I certainly want to express my personal appreciation to Mrs. Tilly and the members of the Committee, for giving me this opportunity. I would also like to express just a personal word of thanks and appreciation for your vital witness in this period of transition which we are facing in our Southland, and in the nation, and I am sure that as a result of this genuine concern, and your significant work in communities all across the South, we have a better South today and I am sure will have a better South tomorrow with your continued endeavor and I do want to express my personal gratitude and appreciation to you of the Fellowship of the Concerned for your significant work and for your forthright witness.

Now, I have been asked to talk about the philosophy behind the student movement. There can be no gainsaying of the fact that we confront a crisis in race relations in the United States. This crisis has been precipitated on the one hand by the determined resistance of reactionary forces in the South to the Supreme Court's decision in 1954 outlawing segregation in the public schools. And we know that at times this resistance has risen to ominous proportions. At times we find the legislative halls of the South ringing loud with such words as interposition and nullification. And all of these forces have developed into massive resistance. But we must also say that the crisis has been precipitated on the other hand by the determination of hundreds and thousands and millions of Negro people to achieve freedom and human dignity. If the Negro stayed in his place and accepted discrimination and segregation, there would be no crisis. But the Negro has a new sense of dignity, a new self respect, and new determination. He has re-evaluated his own intrinsic worth. Now this new sense of dignity on the part of the Negro grows out of the same longing for freedom and human dignity on the part of the oppressed people all over the world; for we see it in Africa, we see it in Asia, and we see it all over the world. Now we must say that this struggle for freedom will not come to an automatic halt, for history reveals to us that once oppressed people rise up against that oppression, there is no stopping point short of full freedom. On the other hand, history reveals to us that those who oppose the movement for freedom are those who are in privileged positions who very seldom give up their privileges without strong resistance. And they very seldom do it voluntarily. So the sense of struggle

will continue. The question is how will the struggle be waged.

Now there are three ways that oppressed people have generally dealt with their oppression. One way is the method of acquiescence, the method of surrender; that is, the individuals will somehow adjust themselves to oppression, they adjust themselves to discrimination or to segregation or colonialism or what have you. The other method that has been used in history is that of rising up against the oppressor with corroding hatred and physical violence. Now of course we know about this method in western civilization, because in a sense it has been the hallmark of its grandeur, and the inseparable twin of western materialism. But there is a weakness in this method because it ends up creating many more social problems than it solves. And I am convinced that if the Negro succumbs to the temptation of using violence in his struggle for freedom and justice, unborn generations will be the recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness. And our chief legacy to the future will be an endless reign of meaningless chaos.

But there is another way, namely the way of non-violent resistance. This method was popularized in our generation by a little man from India, whose name was Mohandas K. Gandhi. He used this method in a magnificent way to free his people from the economic exploitation and the political domination inflicted upon them by a foreign power.

This has been the method used by the student movement in the South and all over the United States. And naturally whenever I talk about the student movement I cannot be totally objective. I have to be somewhat subjective because of my great admiration for what the students have done. For in a real sense they have taken our deep groans and passionate yearnings for freedom, and filtered them in their own tender souls, and fashioned them into a creative protest which is an epic known all over our nation. As a result of their disciplined, non-violent, yet courageous struggle, they have been able to do wonders in the South, and in our nation. But this movement does have an underlying philosophy, it has certain ideas that are attached to it, it has certain philosophical precepts. These are the things that I would like to discuss for the few moments left.

I would say that the first point or the first principle in the movement is the idea that means must be as pure as the end. This movement is based on the philosophy that ends and means must cohere. Now this has been one of the long struggles in history, the whole idea of means and ends. Great philosophers have grappled with it, and sometimes they have emerged with the idea, from Machiavelli on down, that the end justifies the means. There is a great system of thought in our world today, known as Communism. And I think that with all of the weaknesses and tragedies of Communism, we find its greatest tragedy right here, that it goes under the philosophy that the end justifies the means that are used in the process. So we can read or we can hear the Lenins say that lying, deceit, or violence, that many of these things justify the ends of the classless society.

This is where the student movement and the non-violent movement that is taking place in our nation would break with Communism and any other system that would argue that the end justifies the means. For in the long run, we must see that the end represents the means in process and the ideal in the making. In other words, we cannot believe, or we cannot go with the idea

that the end justifies the means because the end is pre-existent in the means. So the idea of non-violent resistance, the philosophy of non-violent resistance, is the philosophy which says that the means must be as pure as the end, that in the long run of history, immoral destructive means cannot bring about moral and constructive ends.

There is another thing about this philosophy, this method of non-violence which is followed by the student movement. It says that those who adhere to or follow this philosophy must follow a consistent principle of non-injury. They must consistently refuse to inflict injury upon another. Sometimes you will read the literature of the student movement and see that, as they are getting ready for the sit-in or stand-in, they will read something like this, "if you are hit do not hit back, if you are cursed do not curse back." This is the whole idea, that the individual who is engaged in a non-violent struggle must never inflict injury upon another. Now this has an external aspect and it has an internal one. From the external point of view it means that the individuals involved must avoid external physical violence. So they don't have guns, they don't retaliate with physical violence. If they are hit in the process, they avoid external physical violence at every point. But it also means that they avoid internal violence of spirit. This is why the love ethic stands so high in the student movement. We have a great deal of talk about love and non-violence in this whole thrust.

Now when the students talk about love, certainly they are not talking about emotional bosh, they are not talking about merely a sentimental outpouring; they're talking something much deeper, and I always have to stop and try to define the meaning of love in this context. The Greek language comes to our aid in trying to deal with this. There are three words in the Greek language for love, one is the word Eros. This is a beautiful type of love, it is an aesthetic love. Plato talks about it a great deal in his dialogue, the yearning of the soul for the realm of the divine. It has come to us to be a sort of romantic love, and so in a sense we have read about it and experienced it. We've read about it in all the beauties of literature. I guess in a sense Edgar Allan Poe was talking about Eros when he talked about his beautiful Annabelle Lee, with the love surrounded by the halo of eternity. In a sense Shakespeare was talking about Eros when he said "Love is not love which alters when alteration finds, or bends with the remover to remove; O, no! it is an ever fixed mark that looks on tempest and is never shaken, it is the star to every wandering bark." (You know, I remember that because I used to quote it to this little lady when we were courting; that's Eros.) The Greek language talks about Philia which was another level of love. It is an intimate affection between personal friends, it is a reciprocal love. On this level you love because you are loved. It is friendship.

Then the Greek language comes out with another word which is called the Agape. Agape is more than romantic love, agape is more than friendship. Agape is understanding, creative, redemptive, good will to all men. It is an overflowing love which seeks nothing in return. Theologians would say that it is the love of God operating in the human heart. So that when one rises to love on this level, he loves men not because he likes them, not because their ways appeal to him, but he loves every man because God loves him. And he rises to the point of loving the person

who does an evil deed while hating the deed that the person does. I think this is what Jesus meant when he said "love your enemies." I'm very happy that he didn't say like your enemies, because it is pretty difficult to like some people. Like is sentimental, and it is pretty difficult to like someone bombing your home; it is pretty difficult to like somebody threatening your children; it is difficult to like congressmen who spend all of their time trying to defeat civil rights. But Jesus says love them, and love is greater than like. Love is understanding, redemptive, creative, good will for all men. And it is this idea, it is this whole ethic of love which is the idea standing at the basis of the student movement.

There is something else: that one seeks to defeat the unjust system, rather than individuals who are caught in that system. And that one goes on believing that somehow this is the important thing, to get rid of the evil system and not the individual who happens to be misguided, who happens to be misled, who was taught wrong. The thing to do is to get rid of the system and thereby create a moral balance within society.

Another thing that stands at the center of this movement is another idea: that suffering can be a most creative and powerful social force. Suffering has certain moral attributes involved, but it can be a powerful and creative social force. Now, it is very interesting at this point to notice that both violence and non-violence agree that suffering can be a very powerful social force. But there is this difference: violence says that suffering can be a powerful social force by inflicting the suffering on somebody else; so this is what we do in war, this is what we do in the whole violent thrust of the violent movement. It believes that you achieve some end by inflicting suffering on another. The non-violent say that suffering becomes a powerful social force when you willingly accept that violence on yourself, so that self-suffering stands at the center of the non-violent movement and the individuals involved are able to suffer in a creative manner, feeling that unearned suffering is redemptive, and that suffering may serve to transform the social situation.

Another thing in this movement is the idea that there is within human nature an amazing potential for goodness. There is within human nature something that can respond to goodness. I know somebody's liable to say that this is an unrealistic movement if it goes on believing that all people are good. Well, I didn't say that. I think the students are realistic enough to believe that there is a strange dichotomy of disturbing dualism within human nature. Many of the great philosophers and thinkers through the ages have seen this. It caused Ovid the Latin poet to say, "I see and approve the better things of life, but the evil things I do." It caused even St. Augustine to say "Lord, make me pure, but not yet." So that that is in human nature. Plato, centuries ago said that the human personality is like a charioteer with two headstrong horses, each wanting to go in different directions, so that within our own individual lives we see this conflict and certainly when we come to the collective life of man, we see a strange badness. But in spite of this there is something in human nature that can respond to goodness. So that man is neither innately good nor is he innately bad; he has potentialities for both. So in this sense, Carlyle was right when he said, that "there are depths in man which go down to the lowest hell, and heights which reach the highest heaven, for are not both

heaven and hell made out of him, everlasting miracle and mystery that he is?" Man has the capacity to be good, man has the capacity to be evil.

And so the non-violent resister never lets this idea go, that there is something within human nature that can respond to goodness. So that a Jesus of Nazareth or a Mohandas Ghandi, can appeal to human beings and appeal to that element of goodness within them, and a Hitler can appeal to the element of evil within them. But we must never forget that there is something within human nature that can respond to goodness, that man is not totally depraved, to put it in theological terms, the image of God is never totally gone. And so the individuals who believe in this movement and who believe in non-violence and our struggle in the South, somehow believe that even the worst segregationist can become an integrationist. Now sometimes it is hard to believe that this is what this movement says, and it believes it firmly, that there is something within human nature that can be changed, and this stands at the top of the whole philosophy of the student movement and the philosophy of non-violence.

It says something else. It says that it is as much a moral obligation to refuse to cooperate with evil as it is to cooperate with good. Non-cooperation with evil is as much a moral obligation as the cooperation with good. So that the student movement is willing to stand up courageously on the idea of civil disobedience. Now I think this is the part of the student movement that is probably misunderstood more than anything else. And it is a difficult aspect, because on the one hand the students would say, and I would say, and all the people who believe in civil rights would say, obey the Supreme Court's decision of 1954 and at the same time, we would disobey certain laws that exist on the statutes of the South today.

This brings in the whole question of how can you be logically consistent when you advocate obeying some laws and disobeying other laws. Well, I think one would have to see the whole meaning of this movement at this point by seeing that the students recognize that there are two types of laws. There are just laws and there are unjust laws. And they would be the first to say obey the just laws, they would be the first to say that men and women have a moral obligation to obey just and right laws. And they would go on to say that we must see that there are unjust laws. Now the question comes into being, what is the difference, and who determines the difference, what is the difference between a just and an unjust law?

Well, a just law is a law that squares with a moral law. It is a law that squares with that which is right, so that any law that uplifts human personality is a just law. Whereas that law which is out of harmony with the moral is a law which does not square with the moral law of the universe. It does not square with the law of God, so for that reason it is unjust and any law that degrades the human personality is an unjust law.

Well, somebody says that that does not mean anything to me; first, I don't believe in these abstract things called moral laws and I'm not too religious, so I don't believe in the law of God; you have to get a little more concrete, and more practical. What do you mean when you say that a law is unjust, and a law is just? Well, I would go on to say in more concrete terms that an unjust law is a code that the majority inflicts on the minority that is not

binding on itself. So that this becomes difference made legal. Another thing that we can say is that an unjust law is a code which the majority inflicts upon the minority, which that minority had no part in enacting or creating, because that minority had no right to vote in many instances, so that the legislative bodies that made these laws were not democratically elected. Who could ever say that the legislative body of Mississippi was democratically elected, or the legislative body of Alabama was democratically elected, or the legislative body even of Georgia has been democratically elected, when there are people in Terrell County and in other counties because of the color of their skin who cannot vote? They confront reprisals and threats and all of that; so that an unjust law is a law that individuals did not have a part in creating or enacting because they were denied the right to vote.

Now the same token of just law would be just the opposite. A just law becomes saneness made legal. It is a code that the majority, who happen to believe in that code, compel the minority, who don't believe in it, to follow, because they are willing to follow it themselves, so it is saneness made legal. Therefore the individuals who stand up on the basis of civil disobedience realize that they are following something that says that there are just laws and there are unjust laws. Now, they are not anarchists. They believe that there are laws which must be followed; they do not seek to defy the law, they do not seek to evade the law. For many individuals who would call themselves segregationists and who would hold on to segregation at any cost seek to defy the law, they seek to evade the law, and their process can lead on into anarchy. They seek in the final analysis to follow a way of uncivil disobedience, not civil disobedience. And I submit that the individual who disobeys the law, whose conscience tells him it is unjust and who is willing to accept the penalty by staying in jail until that law is altered, is expressing at the moment the very highest respect for law.

This is what the students have followed in their movement. Of course there is nothing new about this, they feel that they are in good company and rightly so. We go back and read the Apology and the Crito, and you see Socrates practicing civil disobedience. And to a degree academic freedom is a reality today because Socrates practiced civil disobedience. The early Christians practiced civil disobedience in a superb manner, to a point where they were willing to be thrown to the lions. They were willing to face all kinds of suffering in order to stand up for what they knew was right even though they knew it was against the laws of the Roman Empire.

We could come up to our own day and we see it in many instances. We must never forget that everything that Hitler did in Germany was "legal." It was illegal to aid and comfort a Jew, in the days of Hitler's Germany. But I believe that if I had the same attitude then as I have now I would publicly aid and comfort my Jewish brothers in Germany if Hitler were alive today calling this an illegal process. If I lived in South Africa today in the midst of the white supremacy law in South Africa, I would join Chief Luthuli and others in saying break these unjust laws. And even let us come up to America. Our nation in a sense came into being through a massive act of civil disobedience, for the Boston Tea Party was nothing but a massive act of civil disobedience. Those who stood up against the slave laws, the abolitionists, by

and large practiced civil disobedience. So I think these students are in good company, and they feel that by practicing civil disobedience they are in line with men and women through the ages who have stood up for something that is morally right.

Now there are one or two other things that I want to say about this student movement, moving out of the philosophy of non-violence, something about what it is a revolt against. On the one hand it is a revolt against the negative peace that has encompassed the South for many years. I remember when I was in Montgomery, Ala., one of the white citizens came to me one day and said—and I think he was very sincere about this—that in Montgomery for all of these years we have been such a peaceful community, we have had so much harmony in race relations and then you people have started this movement and boycott, and it has done so much to disturb race relations, and we just don't love the Negro like we used to love them, because you have destroyed the harmony and the peace that we once had in race relations. And I said to him, in the best way I could say and I tried to say it in non-violent terms, we have never had peace in Montgomery, Ala., we have never had peace in the South. We have had a negative peace, which is merely the absence of tension; we've had a negative peace in which the Negro patiently accepted his situation and his plight, but we've never had true peace, we've never had positive peace, and what we're seeking now is to develop this positive peace. For we must come to see that peace is not merely the absence of some negative force, it is the presence of a positive force. True peace is not merely the absence of tension, but it is the presence of justice and brotherhood. I think this is what Jesus meant when he said, I come not to bring peace but a sword. Now Jesus didn't mean he came to start war, to bring a physical sword, and he didn't mean, I come not to bring positive peace. But I think what Jesus was saying in substance was this, that I come not to bring an old negative peace, which makes for stagnant passivity and deadening complacency, I come to bring something different, and whenever I come, a conflict is precipitated, between the old and the new, whenever I come a struggle takes place between justice and injustice, between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. I come not to bring a negative peace, but a positive peace, which is brotherhood, which is justice, which is the Kingdom of God.

And I think this is what we are seeking to do today, and this movement is a revolt against a negative peace and a struggle to bring into being a positive peace, which makes for true brotherhood, true integration, true person-to-person relationships. This movement is also revolt against what is often called tokenism. Here again many people do not understand this, they feel that in this struggle the Negro will be satisfied with tokens of integration, just a few students and a few schools here and there and a few doors open here and there. But this isn't the meaning of the movement and I think that honesty impels me to admit it everywhere I have an opportunity, that the Negro's aim is to bring about complete integration in American life. And he has come to see that token integration is little more than token democracy, which ends up with many new evasive schemes and it ends up with new discrimination, covered up with such niceties of complexity. It is very interesting to discover that the movement has thrived in many communities

that had token integration. So this reveals that the movement is based on a principle that integration must become real and complete, not just token integration.

It is also a revolt against what I often call the myth of time. We hear this quite often, that only time can solve this problem. That if we will only be patient, and only pray—which we must do, we must be patient and we must pray—but there are those who say just do these things and wait for time, and time will solve this problem. Well, the people who argue this do not themselves realize that time is neutral, that it can be used constructively or destructively. At points the people of ill will, the segregationists, have used time much more effectively than the people of good will. So individuals in the struggle must come to realize that it is necessary to aid time, that without this kind of aid, time itself will become an ally of the insurgent and primitive forces of social stagnation. Therefore, this movement is a revolt against the myth of time.

There is a final thing that I would like to say to you, this movement is a movement based on faith in the future. It is a movement based on a philosophy, the possibility of the future bringing into being something real and meaningful. It is a movement based on hope. I think this is very important. The students have developed a theme song for their movement, maybe you've heard it. It goes something like this, "we shall overcome, deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall overcome," and then they go on to say another verse, "we are not afraid, we are not afraid today, deep in my heart I do believe, we shall overcome." So it is out of this deep faith in the future that they are able to move out and adjourn the councils of despair, and to bring new light in the dark chambers of pessimism. I can remember the times that we've been together, I remember that night in Montgomery, Ala., when we had stayed up all night, discussing the Freedom Rides, and that morning came to see that it was necessary to go on with the Freedom Rides, that we would not in all good conscience call an end to the Freedom Rides at that point. And I remember the first group got ready to leave, to take a bus for Jackson, Miss., we all joined hands and started singing together. "We shall overcome, we shall overcome." And something within me said, now how is it that these students can sing this, they are going down to Mississippi, they are going to face hostile and jeering mobs, and yet they could sing," We shall overcome." They may even face physical death, and yet they could sing, "We shall overcome." Most of them realized that they would be thrown into jail, and yet they could sing, "We shall overcome, we are not afraid." Then something caused me to see at that moment the real meaning of the movement. That students had faith in the future. That the movement was based on hope, that this movement had something within it that says somehow even though the arc of the moral universe is long, it bends toward justice. And I think this should be a challenge to all others who are struggling to transform the dangling discords of our Southland into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. There is something in this student movement which says to us, that we shall overcome. Before the victory is won some may have to get scarred up, but we shall overcome. Before the victory of brotherhood is achieved, some will maybe face physical death, but we shall overcome. Before the victory is won, some will lose jobs, some will be

called Communists, and reds, merely because they believe in brotherhood, some will be dismissed as dangerous rabblerousers and agitators merely because they're standing up for what is right, but we shall overcome. That is the basis of this movement, and as I like to say, there is something in this universe that justifies Carlyle in saying no lie can live forever. We shall overcome because there is something in this universe which justifies William Cullen Bryant in saying truth crushed to earth shall rise again. We shall overcome because there is something in this universe that justifies James Russell Lowell in saying, truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne. Yet that scaffold sways the future, and behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadows, keeping watch above His own. With this faith in the future, with this determined struggle, we will be able to emerge from the bleak and desolate midnight of man's inhumanity to man, into the bright and glittering daybreak of freedom and justice. Thank you.

Strictly Subjective

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South Georgia, which is, to be sure, burdened with many deprived and ignorant Negroes and many deprived, ignorant and race-proud whites. But in every community there are ministers preaching that all humans are equal children of God, business men jealous of their prosperity, literally Christian churchwomen, lonely thinkers on the rights of man and plain people pondering the revolution which occupies us.

Albany is the very gem of Southwest Georgia, a city so handsome, prosperous and progressive with industry and military payrolls, surrounding rich farms and retail and wholesale trade, and the rationality and humanity which attends these blessings, that on reflection it seems the city failed rather than triumphed in its lawful and unjust punishment of its gently demanding and self-sacrificing Negroes.

Can we really cherish pride that 737 Negroes, representing what they say is 90 per cent of their people and 43 per cent of Albany's citizenry, were jailed for peaceably, mildly and prayerfully walking their own streets to protest arrest of Freedom Riders testing a "desegregated" railroad waiting room, and refusal of their elected officials to hear them?

Albany has the prettiest and widest streets in South Georgia, maybe in the United States, ample to accommodate a march of Negroes, two by two, or hundreds kneeling or singing before the city hall. Is there not room here for such assembly to remain peaceful, with careful policing? Isn't there room for citizens to walk on such streets without civic and business paralysis? Apparently white bystanders of Albany and from long-dreaded nearby counties—the so-called "violent" element which has intimidated the decent South—apparently these allegedly brutal racists thought there was room. At least they were not moved by the "explosive" spectacles to race rioting.

So, it seems that Albany maintained the peace at needless expense to brave and respectable men, women and children clapped into jail for free assembly, peaceful demonstration and natural demands on arrogant, if law-abiding, white officials.

I think Albany, and its neighboring counties, can do better than the leadership of its cynical newspaper, *The*

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A Virginia View of "Race and Reason"

By Benjamin Muse

SOME OF THE misinformation and scientific error which we have to combat in Virginia and the South I find gathered together in handy form in a book which descended upon us last summer entitled *Race and Reason.* This book is written in a scholarly style; it is redolent with erudition and crowded with impressive allusions. But in substance it is like the exhortation of a Ku Klux Kleagle who has exchanged his bed sheet for an academic cap and gown. If the reader has abundant patience and a strong stomach, it can serve a useful purpose as a compendium of current misinformation on the subject of race.

A casual reader who is new to the subject, or whose reading has been confined to the Citizens Council type of commentary, might guess from the text that the author had devoted a long career to scientific studies related to the races of man. But the author is Mr. Carleton Putnam, a former airlines executive, who retired six years ago and turned first to writing biography — a biography of Theodore Roosevelt. His career as an anthropologist started three years ago, and that more or less by accident.

Mr. Putnam is a Northerner, a "Yankee,' as the cover of his book proclaims—which lends a flavor of generous comradeship and dramatic emphasis to his message. He was seized with a feeling that the segregationists of the South were getting the runaround in the national controversy, and he resolved to bring his superior talents to their rescue. "I could not but believe," he explained in his book, "that so far as it lay within my powers my purpose should be to embolden their anthropologists and relieve their consciences."

It was an article by our own Virginius Dabney and an editorial rebuttal, which appeared in *Life Magazine* in September, 1958, which kindled the flame in Mr. Putnam's bosom. He rallied to the segregationist cause in a letter to *Life,* then a longer one to President Eisenhower and one to Attorney General Rogers. The first two of these letters received only perfunctory acknowledgment and the third was not acknowledged. But copies of the so-called "Putnam letters" were widely circulated and published in the South. A committee in Birmingham, Alabama, raised upwards of $40,000 and had the letter to the President reprinted as advertising in various Northern newspapers. Though the letters and their author were thunderously ignored in the rest of the nation, Carleton Putnam was hailed in the South as a "Daniel come to judgment." He was "overwhelmed," to use his own words, "with courtly expressions of gratitude."

The demand for a more extensive expression of Mr. Putnam's views was obvious; hence *Race and Reason.* The author worked with a celerity which

(Author, journalist, politician and traveler, Mr. Muse is now director of SRC's Southern Leadership Project)

was remarkable. By the following August the book was practically written; on August 3 he addressed a manuscript to various persons, among whom I had the honor of being included, for possible comment. Where lesser men had spent a lifetime in laborious pursuit of anthropological truth, Mr. Putnam in ten months had exhausted the accumulation of pertinent scientific knowledge and found the answers. He came down from the mountain with the final peremptory truth locked in his handsome brief case.

I met the author at a dinner while the book was incubating, and let me say that Mr. Putnam is a gentleman of distinguished presence and impeccable courtesy. He is sincere, I think, in his belief that he has uncovered a transcendental truth that others who have dabbled in anthropology have been unable to grasp. I was surprised, however, when he asked me to recommend some books on the race problem, as he hadn't read much in this field.

In our brief conversation, Mr. Putnam was obsessed with what he calls "equalitarianism." He argued from the unshakable premise that the opponents of segregation are trying to make all men equal.

In a brief correspondence which we had, I wrote to Mr. Putnam:

"I might go farther than you in advocating discrimination, in the sense of selectivity, in education. I submit that your basic error lies in using race as a criterion."

It seems as simple as that. But the "equalitarianism" confusion runs all the way through *Race and Reason,* and its segregationist readers are given a long new word to apply to their opponents. "Equalitarians" are denounced with monotonous redundancy.

I don't know any equalitarians; none of us seeks to make all men equal in personal attainment, or imagines that such a thing would be possible. But, though "equalitarianism" may be a new word to some, the idea which it vaguely suggests is familiar to all of us, and it is one of the major stumbling blocks on the road to interracial understanding. Mr. Putnam's confusion is the confusion of thousands of even well-meaning Southerners. Integration is envisioned as a process of bringing poor, ignorant and uncouth Negroes in to have dinner with educated white people, or into the Country Club. Many a white person is afraid that his expensive restaurant will be invaded by Negro janitors; it never seems to occur to him that white share-croppers never visit his restaurant.

All of us believe in deference to intellect and ability. No one wants to see an unskilled laborer, whether white or colored, accorded the same respect, rewards and privileges as the president of Harvard University, for instance — or the president of Howard University. The monstrous error lies, of course, in judging any individual by his race.

Mr. Putnam is apparently prepared to stand or fall on the proposition that Negroes are inferior in innate ability to whites, but he has gathered together in *Race and Reason* a few odds and ends not directly related to his anthropological thesis. He doesn't raise this unpleasant subject himself, but when a correspondent asks the question, he says: "The Communists have made the integration movement a part of their conspiracy."

We have heard that smear *ad nauseum,* and we have found that those who throw it around are rarely capable of rational cogitation. But one comment occurs to me in passing. The Communists *do* pose as enemies of race discrimination, and, by the apparent rule-of-thumb, we should be against

anything the Communists are for and for anything the Communists are against. Now I read that the Communists are taking measures against alcoholism and that they are sternly in favor of sexual morality. It seems obvious that those who are completely hostile to Communism should go on an alcoholic binge. And, if sexual morality is a part of the Communist conspiracy, where does that leave the red-blooded superpatriot?

Another one of the simple-minded people who provided Mr. Putnam with questions asked:

"It makes my blood boil every time I see a Southerner bully, humiliate or exploit a Negro. How can anyone take sides with such people?"

The thought doesn't make Mr. Putnam's blood boil. His answer:

"Two wrongs don't make a right. The fact that it is wrong to bully, humiliate or exploit a Negro does not make it right to integrate him. . . ."

It is obvious that the white man who bullies a Negro is not on the point of integrating him, and we are left with the essential answer: "Two wrongs don't make a right."

That would not be the Ku Klux Klan answer; it is a cut above that. The Klansman views bullying Negroes as a wholly righteous exercise and, if the Negro doesn't resist, he sees no wrong on either side. The two-wrongs comment is an apt illustration of the attitude of the more decorous Citizens Councils and of a shockingly large element of the white public. It is evidenced in the common practice of arresting Negro victims and allowing white bullies to go free. After interracial violence, however orderly and passive and irreproachable the behavior of the Negro victims may have been in the face of white aggression, we hear the unctuous comment: "There are two sides to the question." — or: "Both sides were at fault."

When a white man bullies a Negro, it is not one wrong but two. The Negro is also wrong. He is wrong just by being a Negro, and, when he is unhappy with segregation his sin is compounded.

Mr. Putnam probably didn't mean to be as blunt as that. A strain of lofty benevolence runs through most of his book. Following a familiar practice of racist propagandists, he calls great and good men to the witness stand however remote in time or place their range of vision may have been from the situation to which his argument is addressed. The author quotes voluminously from Lincoln's reflections on the situation which he observed over a century ago, and to be perfectly fair he quotes also from Lincoln's debating contemporary, Stephen A. Douglas; he cites the comment of Lord Bryce on conditions existing in 1880; he brings in observations of the saintly Albert Schweitzer on the savages of Lambaréné as if that great humanitarian were talking about the Negro American; he even invokes the noble eloquence of William Ewart Gladstone. The English statesman made no reference whatever to the subject of race, but it was nice to have him associated with Mr. Putnam and his book.

At the same time other famous names are withered with the Putnam frown. Arnold Toynbee is demolished with a wisecrack. Franz Boas is browbeaten without mercy; the world had a high opinion of Boas as an authority on the races of man, but the retired airlines executive met him in his own field and laid him low.

The thesis which Mr. Putnam pursues with such devastating vigor is the notion, once widely held among schol-

ars, that the Negro is limited by his racial origin and is innately inferior to the white man. That notion is still widely held, admittedly or subconsciously, by an enormous element of the white public. It is the very essence of race prejudice in so far as race prejudice has a rational basis. In recent years that theory has been blasted in many quarters by the sheer demonstration of Negro capability, and I think in not many more years the weight of such evidence against the theory of Negro inferiority will be overwhelming. As educational and employment opportunities are opened to him, the Negro American is rushing forward in intellectual, cultural and economic achievement.

In the entire 19th Century fewer than 2,500 Negroes graduated from college in the United States. In 1930, 27,141 Negro Americans were in college, and in 1956, 196,000. With increasing integration, accurate estimates are no longer available but the number must now have gone over 200,000. The image of the Negro American is changing all the time and it will change mightily with each new class of Negro college graduates which enters the stream of our national life.

Scientists have long since repudiated the theory of innate inferiority. Dr. Oscar Handlin, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and Harvard professor, who traced the rise and collapse of the racist theory in his *Race and Nationality in American Life,* said: "By 1940 it was difficult to find a serious, reputable exponent of the racist views once so widely held."

That, of course, was written in 1957, before Mr. Putnam turned his attention to anthropology. Other reputable exponents seem to have come forward. Dr. Wesley Critz George, a retired professor of zoology, anatomy, etc. at the University of North Carolina, 73 years of age, spent last summer in a study of "what science has revealed with regard to racial differences," and will shortly publish his report. What science revealed to Dr. George has not been publicly stated, but, as he was paid $3,000 for the undertaking from the emergency fund of Governor John Patterson of Alabama, there is little doubt as to the kind of revelations which were ordered.

Mr. Putnam recommended a reading of an article by Dr. Frank C. J. McGurk, which appeared in *United States News and World Report* in 1956. But he neglected to recommend the reading of a public statement from eighteen of the nation's leading anthropologists and psychologists which followed the McGurk article. In the latter statement it was noted that the American Anthropological Association and the division of the American Psychological Association concerned with social issues, among others, had placed themselves on record as opposed to the conclusion that race was a determiner of innate psychological characteristics. Then these 18 scientists from the nation's leading universities stated flatly that "any decision to use differences in the average achievement of the two racial groups as a basis for classifying in advance any individual child, Negro or white, is scientifically unjustified."

Mr. Putnam states that Southerners "talk of states' rights when they should be talking anthropology." Perhaps he is right. Ten days ago the anthropologists of the United States issued a resounding statement. It is pertinent to note that this was not the expression of a few eccentrics, of a "leftist" faction, or any faction. The resolution was adopted by the American Anthropolog-

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New South

Strictly Subjective

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Herald, its arrogant mayor and city commission and its lawfully unimpeachable police chief suggests.

Surely when the "truce" is over, these people will see, talk to, understand and deal with the just demands of Negroes in a more civilized, South Georgia and American manner.

A Virginia View

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ical Association by a vote of 192 to 0, and it read:

"The American Anthropological Association repudiates statements now appearing in the United States that Negroes are biologically and in innate mental ability inferior to whites, and reaffirms the fact that there is no scientifically established evidence to justify the exclusion of any race from the rights guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States.

"The basic principles of equality of opportunity and equality before the law are compatible with all that is known about human biology. All races possess the abilities needed to participate fully in the democratic way of life and in modern technological civilization."

Bearing witness to the truth is basic to all that we do in the movement for equality of all Southerners and Americans. All that we do to eliminate discrimination in its practical manifestations is an expression of the truth, a reconciliation of the American ideal with truth, in the matter of race. And just as widespread error has clouded the controversy and produced a degree of intellectual debasement in many quarters, it is the truth which ultimately will make us free.